

Docket No. F-7030

Ser. No. 09/879,597

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

Please replace the claims with the claims provided in the listing below wherein status, amendments, additions and cancellations are indicated.

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1. (Currently Amended) A magnetic transfer apparatus including members for performing magnetic transfer of signals from one medium to another, comprising:

a base plate on which the members are placed;
a casing on the base plate covering the members entirely; and
a plurality of particle measurement devices fixed in dispersed positions in the base plate.

2. (Original) The magnetic transfer apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein the particle measurement devices are disposed respectively near each of selected ones of the members.

3. (Currently Amended) The magnetic transfer apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein each of the particle measurement device devices includes a suction port, a particle counter for measuring particles present in air drawn off

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from the casing through the suction port, and a tube for connecting the suction port to the particle counter.

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4. (Original) The magnetic transfer apparatus according to Claim 3, wherein the suction port of each of the particle measurement device devices is disposed respectively near each of selected ones of the members.

5. (Original) A particle monitoring method for evaluating cleanliness in a magnetic transfer apparatus, including:

measuring particles within the magnetic transfer apparatus by a plurality of particle measurement devices disposed at a plurality of measurement locations in the magnetic transfer apparatus;

specifying a source of particles based on numbers of particles measured at each of the measurement locations and numbers of particles measured in a time series at each of the measurement locations; and

evaluating the cleanliness in the magnetic transfer apparatus based on the measurement results.

6. (Original) The particle monitoring method according to Claim 5, wherein the evaluation of cleanliness is based on the numbers of particles measured in a

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time series at each of the measurement locations and a mean value of the measurement results.

7. (New) The particle monitoring method according to Claim 6, wherein the measurement results are correlated to periodic operations of the members.

8. (New) The particle monitoring method according to Claim 5, wherein the measurement results are correlated to periodic operations of the members.

9. (New) The particle monitoring method according to Claim 5, wherein the plurality of measurement devices includes devices disposed respectively at a disk handler, a position detector, a foreign substance inspection unit, a format device, a master disk loader, and a transfer stage.

10. (New) The magnetic transfer apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein the plurality of measurement devices includes devices disposed respectively at a disk handler, a position detector, a foreign substance inspection unit, a format device, a master disk loader, and a transfer stage.